(d) if so, what steps Government are taking to avoid a possible explosive situation?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU): (a) The Supreme Court in Civil Writ Petition No. 202 of 1995 vide order dated 12.12.1996 has ordered that in the Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests of Tirap and Changlang in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, there would be a complete ban on felling of any kind of trees therein because of particular significance to maintain ecological balance needed to preserve biodiversity.

The Court has also ordered that all saw mills, veneer mills and plywood mills in Tirap and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh and within a distance of 100 km. from its border in Assam be closed immediately. The Court has also directed that notwithstanding the closure of any saw mill or other wood-based industry pursuant to this order, the workers employed in such unit will be continuing to be paid their full emoluments due and shall not be retrenched or removed from service for this reason.

(b) There are a good number of employment generation schemes including self-employment schemes financed by Government of India and the State Governments are at liberty to utilise such schemes to provide alternative means of employment to youths, whose traditional means of livelihood are affected, if any, by the interim Order of the Supreme Court.

(c) No such report has been received so far by the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment.

(d) Question does not arise.

Dredging in Hooghly River

96. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to safeguard navigational safety measures in Hooghly rivers by dredging the Hooghly river;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the project is likely to start to protect the ports?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (c) Regular maintenance dredging of Hooghly river is being done by the Calcutta Port Trust through Dredging Corporation of India and through their own dredgers. Apart from dredging, river training works have also been done/planned to be done by the Port to stabilise the channel and improve the depths.

Construction of highway corridors

97. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct highway corridors on the golden quadrilateral along the west coast;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the budget and funding proposals; and

(c) by when the job would be taken up?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir. West Coast Road is not proposed to be improved together with the golden quadrilateral.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Development, upgradation and strengthening of surface transport in Jharkhand region

98. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated new strategy for development, upgradation and strengthening, of surface transport infrastructure in the country and particularly in the backward regions in Bihar to facilitate faster economic